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THE MARKETING OF CANNING CLUB PRODUCTS.

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The purpose of this publication is to anticipate the marketing problems of canning clubs and to place before them working suggestions to meet the problems successfully when they arise.

In productive business of any kind marketing, as a general rule, is the limiting factor. This fact is fundamental and must be considered always in connection with the ever-increasing club production.

A manufacturer of wagons, for instance, rarely debates whether he can secure the raw materials, the building, machinery, equipment, and the labor to produce 1,000 wagons more than he manufactured last year, but he does debate whether he can find a market for the additional output. If he decides that his salesmen and market organization can dispose of the thousand additional wagons, he proceeds with their manufacture; if he is not convinced that they can be disposed of, he is unlikely to undertake their production. This illustration represents a principle which holds true in all lines of production, including such articles as are manufactured or produced by boys' and girls' clubs. It is necessary, therefore, that as club organization and production grow more attention be paid to the marketing problem, that is, the disposition of the output.

INFORMAL SURVEY.

How much of the kind of goods produced by canning clubs is consumed in your community and in your county? In other words, how much market can be secured for club products, first, in the locality; second, in the county; and, finally, within the State? One of the first things is to make an inquiry or study of the available or possible local market to ascertain the following items in regard to club or similar products: Consuming capacity of community served by retailers; quantity of various kinds of produce handled by the retailers; the source from which they obtain their supplies; the prices they pay; the price at which they sell; and their attitude toward handling club products in the place of some of their commercial products.

NOTE.—This publication is of interest to persons connected with, or interested in, the work of the canning clubs in all parts of the country. Also of interest to persons who wish to market home-canned products.

Such a survey, as the work is organized at present, may appropriately be based on the county as a unit. If clubs are well distributed over the county, the work of making the survey may be distributed. If the various sections of the county are not well represented by local clubs, the work will have to be undertaken in some localities by persons from other parts of the county. The whole county should be included in the study, so that the local or home market may be supplied first. The importance of such a survey can hardly be overemphasized, as it is necessary to know the consuming capacity of the available or possible markets in order to estimate the possible limit to a profitable output. This information can be of value only when carefully secured in a thorough manner.

When a survey is being made the merchants should be made acquainted with the products in which the clubs are specializing, so as to open and develop a market for them. The greater the quantity of special products in comparison with the quantity of plain canned goods (such as tomatoes) the less the competition with commercial canned goods. Once the consuming public is acquainted with the special products of the clubs the marketing will be a less difficult part of club work. The special products the clubs have been instructed to make have a field very largely their own and will come into marketing competition with ordinary canned goods to but a limited extent.

A local study can be made by inquiring of the local merchants as to what quantities of the goods in question they handle during a year. It is unnecessary to say that tact should be used in the matter. The local railroad freight agent also might be able to give some idea of the quantity of shipments brought in. Local boards of trade or chambers of commerce doubtless would be glad to aid where it is thought desirable to have them do so. The Department of Agriculture will be glad to be consulted at any time on this question and will give needed assistance in so far as practicable.

ADVERTISING.

In disposing of club products, advertising—that is, bringing the goods to the attention of the consuming public—is as necessary as in any other line of business.

If it is found necessary or desirable to have some funds for advertising, each club girl in a county might contribute one, two, or more cans or containers of products each year for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a county fund for such purposes. This would not be burdensome on any club member and the necessary amount could be raised without difficulty. This plan may be used also to provide a guarantee fund to replace unsatisfactory goods or for other purposes connected with club activity.

The necessary advertising may take a variety of forms. Some of those which have been found successful are outlined.

EXHIBITS.

Exhibits of various kinds help materially as advertising features in the marketing campaign. They may be either permanent or temporary exhibits. In either case, when used for market purposes they should represent accurately the products to be marketed, so that disappointment to consumers may be avoided. For example: If peaches have been put up in commercial glass jars for sale the exhibit should show just that kind of containers and not, say, a fancy square glass container with a fancy pack not representing the actual article for sale. If it is desired to show in glass what is for sale in tin the glass and tin containers should be placed side by side and should be placarded accordingly. Care should be exercised that the pack in the glass container is not superior to that in the tin.

Permanent exhibits are those which are intended to be kept in place continuously. In almost any town or village a show window or space can be obtained in a public building or office, such as that of the board of trade, chamber of commerce, county agent, or county superintendent of schools, or public rest rooms or rooms of women's clubs. In this window or space an exhibit of club products may be placed, with appropriate advertising pennants, labels or signs. These should be worded in a catchy, though strictly truthful way, and should be executed, whether by hand or printing, in a good, simple, and attractive manner. These exhibits should be kept in good appearance at all times. When the stock they represent and advertise is sold out the wording displayed with the exhibit should be changed to an announcement that the available supply has been sold, and that as soon as the next crop is available the display and announcements concerning it will be put into place.

Temporary exhibits are those which are placed for a short time only at such places as fairs and meetings. They should be as well arranged and as appropriately placarded as the permanent exhibits.

Every retailer or user who agrees to handle club products should be prevailed upon to make a display in a window, or other conspicuous place, with appropriate advertising as suggested. Hotels and restaurants that use club products should be induced to so state on their menus.

USE OF THE PRESS.

It has usually been found that local, county, and even city papers are glad to secure news in connection with the club work and its progress and products. This fact can be turned to good use in creating a market or outlet for the club products as well as in interesting people in other phases of club work. It should be kept

in mind always, and if there is anyone in the county connected with the club work or interested in the club work who can write good advertising material, his or her services should be secured for advertising the club products. Usually the necessary advertising of products for sale can be included incidentally in articles on club work. At times and under some circumstances it may be desirable or necessary to insert regular display advertisements. Many papers probably would be willing to donate a display advertisement of club products if the matter were presented to them in a way to compel interest. The following wording for such display advertisements or for use in connection with window or other displays is offered merely as a suggestion. It may be altered or other wording can be used to suit circumstances: "We patronize home industries and home business. Do you? Why not buy your supply of canned fruits and vegetables, preserves, jellies, jams, marmalades, etc., from the Canning Club girls of this, your home, county? Inquire of your local grocer for these products. If he does not handle them, notify the county agent in charge of the Boys' and Girls' Club work, _____. The goods are standardized, and any unsatisfactory purchases are replaced. Why not help to build up home industry and thereby build up the homes of your county?"

COOPERATION BY TOWN AND CITY HOUSEWIVES.

If the town housewives will cooperate by asking at their grocers for club products, it will aid materially in persuading dealers to handle the club output. If the inquiries are persistent, they will practically make it necessary for the grocer to put club products in stock; in other words, part of the marketing campaign consists in creating a demand for club products. If the town and city housewives can be persuaded to cooperate in this way, it will doubtless help materially.

OTHER SUGGESTED FORMS.

"Buy a can" days may be made a part of a concerted campaign to create a demand for club goods. Demonstration lunches, at which club-canned products are served, in county seats or other towns and cities, may be useful. They can be given by boys and girls in uniform, who have been specially trained for the work, in charge of the county agent or club leader. Town and city housewives, as well as business men, should be invited to these demonstration lunches. When given in connection with a meeting or convention of some kind they are particularly effective.

Finally, if all persons interested in the home canning club work will talk club products frequently but judiciously, both in season and out of season, in a way to create interest, specific advertising may not be necessary.

STANDARDIZATION AND RELIABILITY.

Club products to succeed in competition with other goods (where they enter into such competition), either in the home or other market, must be standardized and therefore entirely dependable. A new customer, unacquainted with the "4-H" brand, finding only ordinary, or perhaps off-grade products in the container bearing the label, will not only be disappointed but will have a false impression as to what the "4-H" brand means. On the other hand, if care has been taken so that the pack is absolutely up to the standard set for "4-H" brand goods, or a little superior to it, the new purchaser will have a good impression of what "4-H" brand quality means, and will seek it again. This is a day of marketing goods by brand. Commercial packers have long recognized this fact, and often work to prevent imitation or infringement. They endeavor to make the pack under any given label consistently uniform. For success in marketing club products, standardizing and making dependable beyond question is as necessary as in commercial marketing. Every container which is fully up to the standard represented by the label or brand is an advertisement in itself and is often a guaranty of further purchases. On the other hand, disappointing quality means not only no further purchases, but unfavorable comment if the subject should come up in conversation between the purchaser and friends.

To sum up briefly, quality must be the first and greatest consideration if success in marketing is to be obtained.

SOME MARKETING PLANS.

Under the North Carolina plan for marketing club products, a committee takes charge of the matter. This committee canvasses housewives for orders, which are duly recorded on suitable blanks provided in book form. The housewife's grocer is named on the order, and when the canvas is completed the various grocers are informed of the orders that have been placed by housewives for delivery through their stores. This method is followed for the purpose of inducing the retail grocers to handle club products. Should any refuse, the deliveries which would have been made through them are made direct, as per agreement when the order was received. If the clubs can not sell all their products locally, they have recourse to the county committee for assistance. In case any county can not sell its goods within its own limits, it then appeals to the State committee for help. The marketing committee of the local club consists of five club members most suited to the work. The chairmen of these local marketing committees constitute the county committee, from which an executive board is selected, and the chairmen of the county committees constitute the State committee, which selects an executive

board. This marketing plan is not described in order that it be adopted as it stands, but it may be varied as the needs of any local club, county, or State may require.

In Mississippi the State is divided into five districts, according to geography, railroad connections, and products. The county agents (6 to 8) in each of the five districts constitute the district marketing committee, one of their number being chairman. The five chairmen compose the State committee. All marketing problems are presented by the State agent or club leader to the committee. This method is used as a means of education and development for the county agents, so they may give proper information and aid to the club members.

In the State of Washington there are many specialized crops, among these the apple crop. An investigation in one of the cities of the State showed that wholesalers imported from the East 200,000 gallons of pie filling. The club leader had a conference with the local banker and the wholesale grocer, and as a result the canning clubs in the vicinity of that city packed for the market 7,000 No. 10 cans of windfall apples. They were handled directly by the wholesalers and the bakers. In 1917 the wholesalers and bakers agreed to take the entire output of the clubs to the extent of 200,000 cans.

The Chattanooga plan is as follows: A large booth is maintained in the central market house, with a club member in charge. The city commissioners gave this booth for the use of the canning club members and their mothers. "Before the establishment of this booth the disposal of canned goods was a problem. Now, no matter what the crop may be, the canned goods are sold locally at advanced prices." The member in charge of the booth receives 10 per cent on sales made for club members and 15 per cent on sales made for others. Many customers ask for, and purchase, articles made by certain members only, as they have learned by experience that their products show the result of unusual skill. Recently a canning outfit and a gas stove were installed for use in filling orders for baked fowl, jellies, fruit butters, etc.

A committee from clubs in the neighborhood of a city of Massachusetts arranged with one local grocer for a space in his store to exhibit and offer for sale canned products. The clubs keep the stock in the store replenished and pay the storekeeper a specified per cent of profit for making the sales and handling the goods. This arrangement has been satisfactory both to the club members and the storekeeper.

These plans could doubtless be adapted for use in a number of cities and large towns.

SUGGESTED POSSIBLE MARKETS.

A considerable outlet for products of the canning clubs can be secured by marketing direct to large consumers, such as State and county institutions, including universities, colleges, sanitariums, asylums, and reform schools, as well as to hotels, restaurants, boarding houses, dining-car service, sawmills, etc. Many counties have factory villages or other industrial villages and towns which may take large quantities of club products once they are acquainted with their quality.

Many towns and cities of our country have "farmers' markets." An open space or a roofed-over space is provided, where the farmers can come at appointed times to offer their produce. In some county seats and other towns and cities a weekly farmers' market may be desirable; in others a market twice a month, such as the first and third Saturdays, or the second and fourth Fridays of the month. Where these markets do not exist they might be started by the clubs of a county for the sale of club products if they are not handled by the retail merchants, or for the sale of fresh fruit, vegetables, butter, eggs, poultry, and other farm produce.

From time to time a market day may be given over to the demonstration of grading and standardizing, first one and then another, of the articles of produce brought to the farmers' market. This will be beneficial both to the producer and to the consumer.

MARKETING OUTSIDE THE STATE.

When canned foods are offered for sale their preparation and labeling is subject to certain requirements which should be observed and upon which the seller should be fully informed. Products sold wholly in the same State are subject to the requirements of the State laws. For information concerning these laws the State food commissioner, or corresponding official, usually located at the State capital, should be communicated with.

Articles of food manufactured, sold, or offered for sale in the District of Columbia or the Territories, or shipped or delivered for shipment in interstate commerce, or exported or offered for export to a foreign country, or received in any State or Territory or the District of Columbia from any other State or Territory or the District of Columbia or a foreign country and subsequently delivered or offered for delivery in original unbroken packages, for pay or otherwise, are subject to the provisions of the Federal Food and Drugs Act.

Information concerning the requirements of this act may be obtained from the Bureau of Chemistry, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. Communications addressed to the Washington

headquarters will be referred to the proper officials for information in this respect. It is suggested that such communications be explicit as to exactly what products are handled.

PRICES.

If definite arrangements for the sale of the output are made before crop conditions and quantity produced can be known, some arrangement in regard to determining what the price shall be should be included in the sale arrangements, so that neither seller nor buyer would suffer loss in case of unusual crop or market conditions.

If prices at the time of delivery should be higher than had been anticipated at the time of making a preliminary arrangement for the sale, the home canners would be disappointed if they were not in a position to realize this higher price. Conversely, if prices at the time of delivery should be lower than had been anticipated, they should be willing to accept the lower prices.

In fairness to both parties, proper provision should be made in the preliminary contract for such a sliding scale of prices.

It may be possible to sell extra fancy packs at high prices, but in a measure, at least, these high prices will limit the sale in such a way that the net return may be disappointing. On the other hand, at prices somewhat lower, yet sufficient to give adequate returns for labor and material, it will usually be possible to sell a much larger quantity of goods and thereby to obtain a more satisfactory net return.¹

DELIVERY OF GOODS.

When sales are made locally (within a city or county), the matter of delivery is simple, as the goods usually can be delivered by private transportation available to the producer. When a distant market is supplied, much more care is required to prepare the goods for shipping, the transportation charges must be paid, and loss from breakage and other damage must be borne. This means that the nearer home a satisfactory price can be obtained the less is the marketing cost, and, therefore, as a rule, the larger the net returns.

Such means of delivery should be used as will place the goods in the hands of the customer, whether grocer or housewife, in absolutely satisfactory condition, both as to usability and appearance. As far as possible it is also wise to make the delivery suit the convenience of the purchaser. Large users or dealers may place an order for a year's supply but may not have storage space for all of it; hence the necessity for two or more deliveries.

¹ Suggestions for a State cooperative law designed to conform to section 6 of the Clayton Act may be obtained upon request to the Bureau of Markets for Service and Regulatory Announcement No. 20.